Bhutan-

Sl. No.	Proposed rail links From	Distance To	Estimated cost (in Km)	(in Rs. cr.)
1	Hasimara (West Bengal)	Phuentsholing	18	271
2	Rangia (Assam)	Samdrupjongkhar *Via* Darranga	48	583
3	Kokrajhar (Assam)	Gelephu	58	304
4	Banarhat (West Bengal)	Samtse	23	206
5	Pathshala (Assam)	Nanglam	51	751

Further, Detailed Engineering Survey has been undertaken by M/s RITES for Jogbani-Biratnagat and Jayanagar-Bardib as new railway lines in Nepal & for Hasimara-Phuentsholing new railway line in Bhutan.

Bridge over river Chenab

264. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the proposal of construction of a bridge over river Chenab for linking the Kashmir Valley with the rest of India, has been cleared and the abandoned project, the old alignment involving a cost of 1000 crores for the mega-arch bridge, and girder bridge estimated to cost one-tenth *i.e.* Rs. 100 crores has not been accepted; and

(b) if so, whether the apprehended safety reservations expressed by a foreign expert Member of the Committee has been glossed over?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) An Expert Committee was appointed to deliberate on the issue of the stability of the slopes of Chenab bridge. In view of the importance of the structure the said Committee recommended certain field investigations and studies before recommencement of work on the bridge. The required tests have been carried out and the reports are under consideration. There has been no proposal for constructing a girder bridge costing Rs. 100 crore in lieu of mega arch bridge.

(b) Two foreign experts had given their opinion, one of them considered the existing site acceptable while the other suggested further studies for remedial measures to reduce any risk. Accordingly, studies have been conducted.

Proposal for Joginder Nagar - Pathankot - Leh rail line

†265. SHRI SHANTA KUMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(a) whether Government is planning to increase transport facilities in the border areas, keeping in view the augmentation in all kinds of activities by China near the Indo-China border;

(b) whether any proposal is under consideration with regard to construction of Joginder Nagar - Pathankot - Leh - Laddakh railway line, which is very important in this regard;

(c) whether Government has received any proposal regarding this railway line from the Government of Himachal Pradesh; and

(d) the action being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir. A new line to connect the Itanagar (capital of Arunachal Pradesh) with Harmuti (Assam) has been sanctioned in 1996-97 at a cost of Rs. 160.48 crs.. The construction work is in progress. A survey to connect Parashuramkunda (Arunachal Pradesh) with Rupai (Assam) has been conducted. Besides this, under the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project, a new rail line from Quazigund to Baramulla (117.90 kms) has been commissioned. The work of new line from Udhampur to Quazigund is in progress. Moreover, Border Roads Organisation is constructing 61 roads along Indo-China Border covering a total length of 3377 kms in five states as per details given below:

i)	Sikkim	:	03 roads
ii)	Arunachal Pradesh	:	27 roads
iii)	Himachal Pradesh	:	05 roads
iv)	Uttarakhand	:	14 roads
v)	J&K	:	12 roads

(b) to (d) Requests had been received from Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh for laying new railway line from Bilaspur to Leh and gauge conversion of Pathankot - Joginder Nagar with its extension to join Bilaspur - Leh line. The surveys for the proposed gauge conversion and new lines have been taken up. The survey for Bilaspur - Leh and Joginder Nagar - Mandi (on Bilaspur-Leh line) new lines have been completed recently and survey report is under preparation.

'Garib rath' train for BPL people

266. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether her Ministry has planned to introduce "Garib Rath" train for people living Below Poverty Line;

(b) if so, the details/facilities which are likely to be provided to people living Below Poverty Line in this regard;